

<!-- /\* Style Definitions \*/ p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal {mso-style-parent:""; margin:0in; margin-bottom:.0001pt; mso-pagination:widow-orphan; font-size:12.0pt; font-family:"Times New Roman"; mso-fareast-font-family:"Times New Roman";} @page Section1 {size:8.5in 11.0in; margin:1.0in 1.25in 1.0in 1.25in; mso-header-margin:.5in; mso-footer-margin:.5in; mso-paper-source:0;} div.Section1 {page:Section1;} -->

My name is Fran Holmes and I am a member of the Arden Hills City Council. I am here representing myself and many of my constituents.

I would like to thank Rep McCollum, for setting up this public hearing to allow participants to speak at this forum. I would like to thank the elected officials and others speaking at this hearing. This gathering represents democracy in action.

I am very excited about this meeting, because we are now at a point where I have wanted to be since I ran for election to the Arden Hills City Council in 2006.

It is not often that we get a fresh start. But this is what is happening in Arden Hills. A welcome fresh start from more development. We have a chance to make over 500 acres of the TCAAP property become a beautiful park, recreation, and open space area. The planning for Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) property is starting over. Ryan Companies, the developer, has determined that development of the TCAPP area is economically infeasible.

We have once in a lifetime opportunity to preserve this area for park land, recreation, and open space. I would like to add that not only myself and many of my constituents, but a majority of the Arden Hills City Council members also agree that park, recreation and open space is the best use of the vast majority of the land. David Grant, who is out-of-town, Brenda Holden and I are a majority of the Arden Hills City Council who believe that this land should be used for park, recreation and open space. As the project develops, we may also want to investigate the opportunity for renewable energy production at TCAAP with the use of either wind turbines or solar energy.

A majority of the Arden Hills Council members also recognize that dedicating this land to park, recreation, and open space would not be an Arden Hills city initiative. We recognize that a park of this size, over 500 acres, would be more in the nature of a county park. We will look to you Rep McCollum as well as state and county representatives to take the lead in determining the next steps. Arden Hills would like have a seat at the table in planning what is to be done with TCAAP, as we would like to help with this process, but we realize that we would not be the driver.

In the remaining time, would like to address two specific areas:

1. The perception that Arden Hills needs to increase its tax base.

There is a concern by some residents that a mixed use development of commercial and

residential housing, as was being considered in the prior plan with the developer, is necessary for Arden Hills to increase its tax base. However, if we look at the simple facts, a mixed use development would not add any incremental taxes for the City of Arden Hills.

A mixed use development would add to the tax base of Arden Hills. However, due to the economics of any development, for the first thirty years, the taxes raised on the property would be subject to TIF, tax increment financing. This means that to the extent there was an increased tax base, the additional taxes would be used by the developer solely to provide infrastructure and other improvements on the property. There would be little to no additional taxes for the current or future residents of Arden Hills. Second, once the TIF district expired (which would be after 30 years, that is, an entire generation), the increase in taxes would be most likely simply be used to provide necessary services (fire/police/road improvements) solely for the individuals residing on TCAAP. Therefore, even if there would be more tax revenue, there would be more city expenses and there would not net increase.

Second area I would like to briefly address two initiatives I have recently become aware of. Both the State of MN DNR and the Metropolitan Council are focusing of the fragile state of the natural lands in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Each day nearly 60 acres of fields, forests and wetlands in the metro area are lost to development.

The State believes that protection and restoration of key natural lands will help maintain the quality of life in this region. The state is promoting metro conservation corridors with the aim to restore habitat in the metro area. We already know that part of the TCAAP land is a wildlife corridor and a natural bird area. By keeping more of TCAAP park, recreation, and open space, we can enhance the wildlife corridor and the landscape for birds.

Another initiative is by the Metropolitan Council, which has set up a Foundation to add 17,000 acres and 700 miles of trails in the metropolitan area over the next two decades.

By allowing the TCAPP property to be park land, recreation, and open space, we can assist these two initiatives to meet their goals.

I like the idea of doing things over a decade or more. There is no rush here, we can take our time, develop the park land, recreation, and open space slowly to do what is right for the people of Arden Hills, Ramsey County and the metropolitan area.

Thank you.